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whole Earth newsletter

United Church Board for World Ministries Winter 1997, Vol. XXVI, No. 3

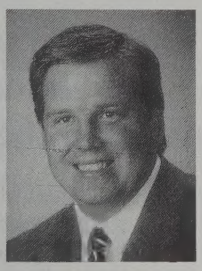
Thirteen appointed by Common Board

Thirteen persons were appointed to serve overseas on behalf of the UCC and the Disciples at the November meeting of the Common Global Ministries Board held in Green Lake, WI, immediately following the UCBWM's 187th Annual Meeting (see related story this page).

Seven of the 13 are serving in the East Asia/Pacific region. Three are new appointees and 10 are returnees.

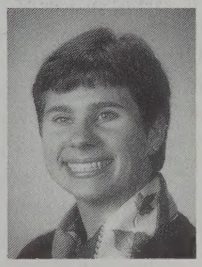
Jodi and Timothy Bobbitt were newly appointed to serve four years in

Jodi Bobbitt

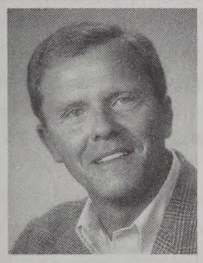


Timothy Bobbitt

Argentina. Tim will pastor the Saavedra congregation in Buenos Aires and Jodi will work with projects related to the health ministry of the Disciples of Christ Church in Argentina. Tim said he felt called to a healing ministry. Jodi, a nurse, said she plans to work with the large refugee community which has come into Argentina from surrounding countries and which has many health care needs.



Jeanne Sokolowski



David Grogan

Jeanne Sokolowski will teach English in the high school division of Kobe College, Nishinomiya, Japan, beginning April 1, for three years. She would like to serve as a role model for students, hoping to "help them look deeper into their own

(Continued on page 9)

New staff named for Southern Asia office

Betty Tankersley

Betty Tankersley has been named the new Global Ministries program associate for the Southern Asia Office. She assumed duties January 1. The Southern Asia Office is located in New York.

She replaces Miriam Young, who resigned to take a position as executive director for the Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace in Washington, D.C.

Tankersley was most recently employed as director of resource development for the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a National Council of Churches of Christ-related organization in New York. The ICCR's mission involves national and international shareholder advocacy on such issues as human rights, social and economic equality, militarism, the world debt crisis, the environment, and international health issues.

From 1992-94 she was special communications assistant to the general secretary of the Council of Churches in Indonesia. She has traveled extensively in southern and southeast Asia.

For two years she was director of communications for the Christian Church Foundation, a division of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She also served as a fraternal worker in Indonesia for the Disciples from 1968-72 and again from 1972-74 for Church World Service.

Tankersley is fluent in the Indonesian language and holds a BA degree in communications/public relations.

Boards acts on resolutions, budget

The Common Global Ministries Board of the UCC and the Disciples adopted five resolutions and approved one position statement at the November meeting in Green Lake, WI. The resolutions involve Jerusalem, Hong Kong, Okinawa, Zimbabwe and Burma; the position statement is on Nigeria.

In discrete action at the 187th Annual Meeting of the United Church Board for World Ministries held just prior to the CGMB meeting, the Board adopted a budget ceiling and honored retiring missionaries (see related article, page 9.)

The resolutions and position statement approved by the CGMB are as follows:

* *Jerusalem: City of Life,* will be sent to the national gatherings of both denominational bodies for consideration. It directs both presidents to seek out relevant U.S. government officials to express

(Continued on page 8)

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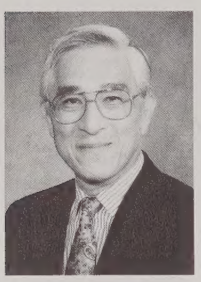
- Rwanda: now what?, p. 12

Message from the EVP



Youthful voices missing . . .

By David Hirano

In November, the United Church Board for World Ministries met for the 187th time. This Annual Meeting was held at the beautiful American Baptist Conference grounds in Green Lake, WI. We met to discern, learn and do God's mission.

While preparing my address it occurred to me that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the Board under which the UCBWM is chartered, was formed by college students. The five young men who took shelter from a thunderstorm under a haystack prayed for and committed themselves to take the Gospel to all the world. They were students at Williams College. It dawned on me that they were teenagers.

By the time these young people petitioned the Evangelical Ministers of Massachusetts to become the ABCFM, they were in their early twenties. But the beginning of the missionary movement in North America was led by very young people.

As we stand on the verge of another millenium and on a new century, I wonder how we can capture the daring, the commitment and the dedication of young people today. I know they have dreams, as did the "Haystack Five." But we have neither legitimized nor encouraged their dreams. We must challenge and be challenged by the young people of our churches. They bring vigor, commitment and freshness that is so desperately needed in our ministries.

While coming back from Brazil after attending the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, a group of young people—Mormon elders—got on the plane. They had just completed their mission in Brazil. They had given two years of their lives to that mission. Most of them earned their money to go abroad; the Mormon Church did not pay their way. They were filled with enthusiasm. While I do not have a fondness for Mormonism, I do admire the ways in which they capture the imagination of young people.

The young people who committed their lives to mission 191 years ago did so with abandon. They also raised the money for mission. But money was not the main concern. The main concern was the mission. They went without a great deal of structure to support them. They went because they felt the call, and in typical, youthful daring, did what some thought to be foolish. They gave their lives to God.

Let us commit ourselves to encourage our young people to envision a world touched by God's love in Jesus Christ, so that they will work to bring about a world where all will live as children of the Holy One.

No. 471 still waiting ....

Global Ministries missionary Marla Schrader and her husband Leo Hosh were at home in Bethlehem two days before last Christmas when they heard that Israel had decided to allow Palestinians from the West Bank into Jerusalem during Christmas week. Hosh is a Bethlehem native and Palestinian Christian whose ancestors, as far back as written and oral history can trace, were all born in Bethlehem. The couple dropped everything to run around town and compile all the required documents to submit an application to the Israeli administration in the West Bank. They were excited about the chance to visit the City of Peace, since Leo had not been allowed into Jerusalem for about a year. (For months, Israeli-imposed travel restrictions have kept the vast majority of Palestinians from entering Jerusalem for any reason.)

In the end, only 470 people were given permission to travel to Jerusalem. "It was just our bad luck," said Marla, "that Leo was number 471." For more information on the ministries of Schrader and Hosh, see the Fall 1996 issue of *Whole Earth Newsletter,* p. 5.

"Precious" gifts from overseas partners to help rebuild burned churches in the U.S.

Both the UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing and its counterpart, the Disciples' Week of Compassion, received contributions from three African partners (two councils of churches and one women's group) to assist with rebuilding churches in the U.S. burned because of hate crimes.

Partner contributions came from the Botswana Christian Council, a women's church group of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa in Plumtree, Zimbabwe, and Theological Education by Extension in Zambia. Both OGHS and WOC received $266.75.

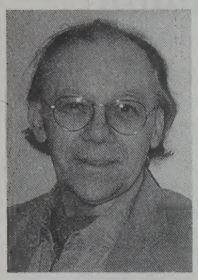
Dan Hoffman, area executive for Africa, called the gifts "very, very precious because of what they say in terms of relationship and partnership." Many expressions of prayer and considerable words of advice were also received. Hoffman intends to publish the prayers and advice.

Continuing the *Missionary Herald,* founded in 1805, *Whole Earth Newsletter* is published three times a year by the United Church Board for World Ministries, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115, whose work is made possible by financial support of Our Church's Wider Mission of the United Church of Christ. No reproduction or usage restrictions. Managing Editor, Helen M. Hayes; Editor, Sandra J. Rooney. Start-up subscription charge of $2 to above address.

Around the Region: the Middle East

East Asia and the Pacific — a regional perspective

By Gary Hoff, Program Associate, East Asia and the Pacific Office



Hoff

In East Asia and the Pacific many old wounds heal slowly. Tensions between North and South Korea continue, despite occasional discussions about reunification. The international tensions created by China's missile tests in the Taiwan Straits before Taiwan's presidential elections last March had its source in a Chinese civil war fought nearly 50 years ago. The effects of nuclear testing in the Pacific may linger for decades to come.

The furor over the North Korean submarine incident last fall completely dominated a greater human tragedy: two years of floods and famine in North Korea. The South stopped sending aid after the incident, and despite assistance from international non-governmental and church organizations, and even the U.S. government, the ability of North Korea to feed its citizens may be affected by the floods for years to come. By the end of December, tensions eased somewhat as the North Koreans agreed to issue a statement of regret over the incident and South Korea restarted their aid program and their support of a North Korean nuclear power plant project.

In South Korea, police suppression of student demonstrations in August was among the most violent in decades. More than 5,000 students were teargassed and arrested after barricading themselves in Yonsei University buildings. In December the ruling party of President Kim Young Sam surreptitiously voted new legislation to curtail union activities and to return much of the domestic intelligence powers to the National Security Planning Agency which persecuted South Korea's students and dissidents with an iron fist during the cold war. The passing of these two pieces of legislation prompted hundreds of thousands of Korean workers to strike.

Christianity and other religions continue to gain converts in China. But the country's far-reaching ambitions are cause for concern in the region. Its military threat to Taiwan has quieted for now, but few Taiwanese doubt that China's military would flex its muscles in their direction again should talk of independence for the island become serious. However, as July 1, 1997, approaches, most eyes have turned to Hong Kong.

Despite the Sino-British Agreement that grants Hong Kong a "high degree of autonomy," Beijing has moved to limit Hong Kong's newly won political freedoms. The democratically elected legislature is to be disbanded and replaced next summer by one more agreeable to China. Hong Kong's first post-1997 chief executive, shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa, was elected by a Selection Committee of 400 Hong Kong citizens appointed by Beijing. Human rights concerns have been raised once again as China has renewed vigorous prosecution of its own pro-democracy political prisoners. Beijing's suggestion that thousands of non-Chinese laborers and domestics working in Hong Kong can be replaced by mainland Chinese after July also has created anxiety among the sizeable non-Chinese population in Hong Kong.

Despite international condemnation, China continues to clamp down on Tibet's culture and religion. For years, Beijing has sought to undermine Tibetan society by encouraging an influx of Chinese immigrants. Today, the population of Tibet's capital, Lhasa, is more than 50% Chinese. The six-year-old boy chosen as the reincarnated Panchen Lama, the second-ranking spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism, is being held under house arrest in Beijing while Chinese authorities have put forth a substitute choice. Buddhist monks are forced to pledge loyalty to the Chinese government or face expulsion from their monasteries. In December a 30-year-old Tibetan exile who returned to his homeland on a Fullbright scholarship to study Tibetan culture was sentenced to 18 years in prison for espionage.

In the Pacific, a worldwide boycott of French goods apparently helped convince France to end its 1995-96 nuclear test program in French Polynesia last January. Two months later, France, the U.S. and Great Britain signed a treaty committing to neither test nor station nuclear weapons in the region. However, serious concern over nuclear contamination remains among many islanders.

Takami receives Magsaysay Award for ARI accomplishments

The Rev. Dr. Toshihiro (Tom) Takami, founder of the Asian Rural Institute in Japan, has been named the winner of the 1996 Magsaysay Award for international understanding.

The award is given for "advancement of amity and understanding between peoples of different countries" and is named for the late Ramon Magsaysay, the popular Philippines president from 1953-57 who initiated movements in land reform and public health programs to aid his people. The award has been given 33 times to individuals and institutions, including Mother Teresa of India, and is sometimes referred to as "the Nobel Prize of Asia."

Takami received the award for his accomplishments at ARI, for inspiring and working for non-governmental organizations in Japan and for his concern for the poor worldwide.

He also had his first book published last year by the Kyodan (United Church) Publishing House, Tokyo. *Living With Soil—ARI and Myself*, is a collection of his articles, essays and lectures.

ARI is an ecumenical rural training school where people from many nations learn to become self-sufficient in food.

The UCC/USA has provided support for ARI's work since its founding. (See related story, page 5.)

Take one step toward a safer world . . .

Mandla's story

Mandla Gobledale, nine-year-old son of Global Ministries missionaries to Zimbabwe Tod and Ana Gobledale, celebrated his birthday in 1995 at Victoria Falls. The family was having a wonderful time and decided to go on safari. They saw buck and monkeys.

Mandla describes this scene: "There was a Mazda in front of us. . . . Suddenly there was a loud explosion and the car in front of us exploded. The driver smashed through the window screen (windshield), blood pouring from his arms, legs and stomach. The corpse lay on the ground in front of the burning car. . . . We told a park ranger and he called an ambulance. When the ambulance arrived, they...drove to the hospital. Unfortunately he was dead on arrival. . . . One of the police officers told us that it had been a landmine."

Ed. note: The preceding paragraph is a fictional account from the mind of a child who is aware of the great danger of landmines. Landmines along Zimbabwe's borders, planted during wartime, still occasionally threaten people and livestock. One third of the world's landmines lie hidden in southern Africa, especially Angola and Mozambique.

- Educate yourself about the landmine situation and make a contribution! (See box offer in adjacent column.)
- Secure as many signatures as possible on petitions calling for the ban of these deadly devices. Call 212/870-2283 for copies. Your names are needed!
- Encourage your young people to enter the 1997 National High School Essay Contest on the United Nations, which is about the elimination of landmines. For information, write to the U.N. at 801 Second Ave., New York,

A PRAYER FOR THE BANNING OF LANDMINES

O GOD OF LIVING PRESENCE, YOU CREATED HEAVEN AND EARTH. AND ON EARTH ALL THAT LIVES AND HAS BEING WAS CREATED BY YOU. BUT AS WE ARE SO OFTEN LESS THAN GOOD AND WE TOO OFTEN PREFER WAR TO PEACE, WE PLANT IN THE EARTH NOT THE SEEDS OF LIFE BUT RATHER LANDMINES THAT MERCILESSLY RIP TENDER YOUNG FLESH AND CRUELLY CRUSH WISE OLD BONES.

WE REMEMBER WITH SORROW THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN STOLEN OR WHOSE BODIES HAVE BEEN MAIMED BY LANDMINES. WE ASK FOR HOPE AND WISDOM AND ENERGY FOR THOSE WHO WORK TO BAN THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF LANDMINES, AND FOR THOSE WHO DAILY RISK THEIR LIVES BY CLEARING MINES THAT HAVE BEEN LAID.

MAY YOUR EARTH NOT BE BROKEN BY WHAT WE PLANT IN THE EARTH. MAY NATIONS TURN FROM SUCH WARRING WAYS AND WELCOME THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE. IN THE NAME OF JESUS WHO WALKS WITH US AND BECKONS US TO WALK IN PEACE. ❧AMEN❧

Take one step toward a safer world!
For each contribution of $10, you will receive:
- a Ban Landmines Now! pin
- a booklet of landmine stories
- a Church World Service Study Sheet
- a Ban Landmines petition

100% of all contributions will be given to the CWS Landmine Appeal. Make checks payable to **UCBWM** and send to:

UCBWM/ Office for Global Sharing
475 Riverside Drive, Floor 16
NY, NY 10115

New UCBWM partnership opportunity for local churches

The newly formed UCC Justice and Peace Ministry represents a new UCBWM partnership and an opportunity for members of local churches to work in tandem with the larger church body in social advocacy and prophetic witness ministries.

Along with living into a new partnership with the Disciples, the UCBWM has also been actively involved in new patterns of collaboration and cooperation with other national UCC instrumentalities and offices. The Justice and Peace Ministry is a coming together of seven different bodies to better resource the social justice needs of local churches, Associations and Conferences.

The vision of the Ministry is to provide local churches with new opportunities for organizing, educating and advocating on social issues. It will also ultimately serve as a springboard for all members and settings of the UCC to engage in a living out of faith that builds communities based on justice and peace.

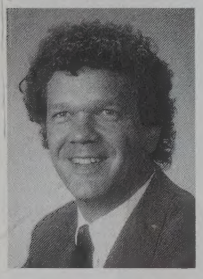
Local church members are offered the option to self-select issues of interest, and may sign up for as many areas as they wish. Persons signing up will receive resources and calls for action, as well as opportunities for training and networking, for those areas they have chosen. Each area chosen calls for a commitment to intentional learning, advocacy, and sharing of information with others.

The issue umbrellas of the Justice and Peace Ministry are as follows: Africa, East Asia/Pacific, Southern Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, Middle East, Europe, United Nations/Global Security, the environment, hunger, economic justice, health care, children's concerns, education, civil and human rights, justice for women, media ethics and advocacy, immigration/refugees, racism, and equal rights for gays/lesbians.

A more complete listing showing specific examples within each of the issue umbrellas, as well as more information on the Justice and Peace Ministry, is available from Sonya Chung, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100, 216/736-2178, email <chungs@ucc.org>.

How We See It From Here

***Jane Sullivan-Davis** and her husband **George** do research, educational and ecumenical work in South America. As NCCC representative for the Andean Region, Jane was part of a delegation sent to be a "voice of comfort and hope"*



G. Sullican-Davis

J. Sullivan-Davis

to the people of Colombia, who live in the midst of a 30-year civil war and the world's highest per capita murder rate. In a recent letter she speaks of courageous groups of people working for a better life in a country so infected by violence that paramilitary groups apply comprehensive strategies to take economic and political control of whole regions. Jane also speaks of the courage of Mayor Gloria Isabel Cuartas, mayor of Apartad'o, Urab'a (population 97,000), the majority of whose inhabitants are widows and children.

As we glanced at the handwritten and typed prayers that Mayor Cuartas had taped to her office furniture, she gave us an historical overview of the region's wealth, conflicts and present strategic importance. She told us that Urab'a is rich in oil, gold and uranium, that it is the site for a future canal to replace the one in Panama and that it is a main stopping point on the international drug traffic routes. She also told us of her proposals to establish neutral zones in Urab'a to protect civilians as an active, first step in the search for a seemingly impossible peace.

We listened to testimonies of 35 pastors and denominational leaders who told how entire rural communities became ghost towns. Four local congregations had had to suspend their activities indefinitely: one of the many sides of the conflict threatened to kill members, leaders and pastors who would stay and not cooperate; the other sides kept watch to see who would stay and cooperate in order to eliminate them. People at the meeting would not say who had threatened, beaten, maimed or assaulted them, their relatives or neighbors.

The last evening of our visit we participated in a "United Worship for Peace in Urab'a" in which we prayed, "Forgive us God for not responding as we should to the needs of our region. Forgive us for not crying with those who cry and suffering with those who suffer."

***George** continued the letter:* Six weeks later these words and actions took on even greater significance as Jane returned to Colombia. On one hand she learned that UNESCO had presented Mayor Gloria Cuartas with its "Mayors for Peace" prize. On the other, ecumeni-

" ... ecumenical partners told her that a paramilitary group had presented the mayor with the head of a 12-year-old boy whom they had murdered; it carried the message, 'We are now in charge ....' "

cal partners told her that a paramilitary group had presented the mayor with the head of a 12-year-old boy whom they had murdered; it carried the message: "We are now in charge of the city of Apartad'o, Urab'a." The decapitation had been televised and broadcast. A hush fell upon people when they spoke of it.

We do not share these horrors to scandalize you or to sensationalize Colombia's situation. We do so in order to illustrate Christ's mission amidst the tremendous human suffering and sadness that are everyday experiences of an entire country and its people.

*Rural people of the third world go to the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) to learn how to become self-sufficient regarding food. ARI director **Jintaro Ueda** reports that more than 1,000 visitors and work-campers every year are also fascinated to find out the institute is a unique global community, genuinely struggling with global issues in a very concrete manner.*

We do not talk much about hunger and poverty of the world, but we try to produce our own food and to remember the food situations of the participants' own villages. We do not read much about human rights issues, but we try every year to include as many tribal/minority people as possible among our participants and to learn from them. In the same way, the environment, recycling and a simple lifestyle are everyday practices.

However, the ARI community is not a realized Utopia. Rather, ARI would be the first and probably the last place and opportunity in their lives for the participants to feel, taste, experience and get assured that there should be ways to overcome at least locally some of the difficulties developing countries have to face. It is also true with many of the volunteers who are from the so-called first world. They have come to realize the need to redirect their lifestyles.

Day of prayer for Burma set

The Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), a partner of the UCC/Disciples' Global Ministries, has invited Christians worldwide to join in a day of prayer for Burma on March 16.

Burma, a neighbor of Thailand, has been struggling under a series of dictatorships, and embroiled in civil war for more than 30 years. In response to the CCT request, Global Ministries is encouraging congregations to pray for an end to the strife, for an open society and religious freedom for all Burmese people, and for democracy and unity.

The Burmese military dictatorship currently in power has refused to let the democratically elected prime minister take office. Since that election, in 1990, the illegal dictatorship has continued systematic repression against the people of Burma, including forced labor and military service, tortures and killings, and ongoing campaigns against ethnic minorities and pro-democracy groups. Meanwhile, with the complicity of the dictatorship, most of the world's heroin comes out of Burma. The military regime spends over 50 percent of Burma's national budget on arms while the Burmese people slide deeper into poverty.

Christianity came to Burma in the 1500's. The number of Christians is estimated at more than seven percent, most concentrated among the ethnic minorities who have been struggling for autonomy and freedom for decades.

Issue Perspective

As the UCBWM Office in New York closed early the evening before Christmas Eve, a call came from the lobby: a man from a far country was pleading for a place to stay. But there was no one there to help him. He came back two days later when the Refugee Resettlement Office reopened. The experience was profound for the one who had met the asylum seeker, just freed from detention with no place to rest. In this man's uprootedness and vulnerability, Jesus was present. Already out of town, I later saw in my own self-absorption with the holidays how easy it is to close early—and close out the stranger in need.

The World Council of Churches has proclaimed 1997 "The Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity With Uprooted People." Global migration is on the rise. Now more than one in every 50 human beings is a refugee or international migrant. To be relevant, the church is called to reach out to people forced to leave their homelands.

Churches' challenge

The WCC's statement, *A Moment to Choose —Risking to Be With Uprooted People*, challenges churches to counteract "violence, rejection and racist hostility directed against uprooted people" which "compound traumas of forced migration by restricting mobility, participation in society and the ability to obtain employment and services in places of transit or refuge. This violence and injustice is a part of the rising tide of racism and xenophobia worldwide which determines privilege and security for some but consigns others to insecurity and exclusion."

We live in a context of growing hostility expressed toward uprooted people. This is evident in the anti-immigrant backlash and immigration legislation which discriminates against legal immigrants. The WCC statement calls us to examine our failures. As a church we have not nurtured a society which affirms the dignity of immigrants. A General Synod XX resolution adopted in 1995 calls on us to urge elected representatives to

" ... resist the temptation to scapegoat ...."

"resist the temptation to scapegoat immigrants, undocumented or otherwise," and to "oppose any effort to deny public education, health services and other benefits to immigrants, undocumented or otherwise." Through the UCC's Justice and Peace Network, an Immigration Cluster was formed in 1996 to respond to the resolution. Efforts are being made to understand the implications of new immigration law for clergy and members in our churches such as teachers and health care professionals who work with immigrants on a daily basis.

Legals denied benefits

New welfare legislation, for the first time in history, makes a distinction between citizens and non-citizens—denying legal residents food stamps and Supplemental Security Income, with the exception of refugees. New immigrants will be barred for five years after entry from a variety of other benefit programs, and the grounds for which permanent residents can be removed from the U.S. are increased.

Recognizing that uprooted people are called by many names, the statement affirms that the uprooted are those "forced to leave their communities: those who flee because of persecution and war, those who are forcibly displaced because of environmental devastation and those who are compelled to seek sustenance in a city or abroad because they cannot survive at home." The WCC asks churches to proclaim, "We are the Church of Jesus Christ the Stranger" (Mat. 25:31-46). The judgment of nations is based on the mercy shown to those most vulnerable. By welcoming the stranger, we are about God's work. In welcoming refugees, we are reaching out to Jesus.

Waiting for Jesus

Waiting for a Vietnamese couple to step off the plane, the Rev. John Gill of Knoxville, TN, said it was like waiting for Jesus. A congregation in Arlington, VA, prayed daily for the Amerasian family they had agreed to sponsor for months before the family arrived. The Rev. Jirair Sogomian recognized Jesus' parables when the Armenian Martyrs Congregational Church, Havertown, PA, sponsored an Armenian family. He stopped at a member's home to pick up some furniture for the empty apartment and on his way out was given money to " 'take care of additional needs.' I couldn't help but think of the good Samaritan giving two denarii to the innkeeper and saying, 'Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.' "

Participating in the Refugee Resettlement Program of the

"In the past 10 years alone, 10,000 refugees have been resettled by the UCBWM."

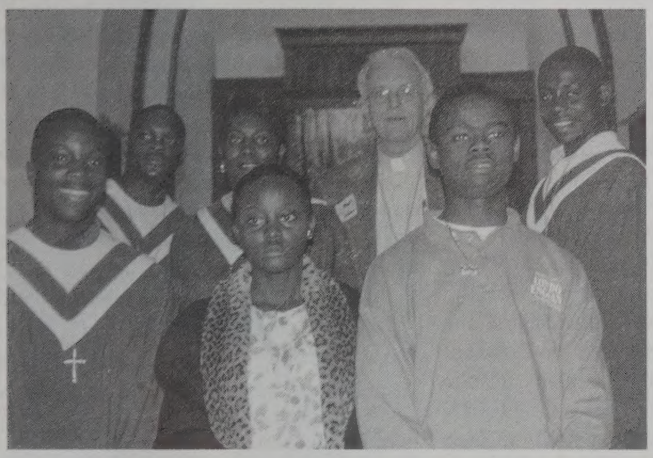
UCBWM is one way to reach out to the uprooted. In the past 10 years alone, 10,000 refugees have been resettled by the UCBWM. The UCBWM Refugee Resettlement Office works in cooperation with the CWS Immigration and Refugee Program, and a network of 35 ecumenical refugee offices in 23 states. About 850 refugees, asylum seekers and others assigned to the UCC were assisted during 1996, with about 75 congregations participating. The most important contributor to the process is the local church, which commits to sponsor and welcome refugees into the community.

Self-sufficiency

Agreeing to sponsor a refugee family takes faith, organizational skill and courage. Amistad UCC in Marietta, GA, with 120 members, is a new church start organized in 1994. They are now sponsoring their third family in three years, helping them toward self-sufficiency. This church has sponsored "women at risk," a special designation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Amistad has chosen to take the risk of being with uprooted women and children, welcoming them as family and helping them become rooted in a new community.

Uprooted people may be found in your own community. In August I received a call from Sam, a Liberian man whose wife, six sons and daughter had finally arrived from Ghana where they had been living as refugees. Sam had received political asylum in 1994, and in 1996 was able to welcome his family after a five-year separation.

Uprooted people: Jesus as stranger



LIBERIAN ASYLEE FAMILY shares their musical talent with Westerleigh Immanuel Church, UCC, Staten Island, New York. L-R (front): Jerome, Hana, Moses; (back): James, Gillian, the Rev. Munro Roberts, Odysseus. (Mary Kuenning Gross photo)

Sam told members of the church council at Westerleigh Immanuel Union Church, Staten Island, how the family had endured a week of bombing in his home near an airport where he worked as a mechanic in 1990 and how he had been detained and interrogated by rebel soldiers. A young soldier who recognized Sam as his former teacher helped him escape. Sam was able to get his family to safety in a neighboring country and get himself to the U.S. He applied for asylum knowing that his family could not return to Liberia.

The Immanuel congregation had started collecting clothing for the family the first night they visited the church. The Rev. Munro Roberts invited them to Worldwide Communion Sunday. The family delighted the congregation during the service with a song written by son James. The mother and three sons sing in the choir. Several teachers in the congregation counsel three college-age sons on career goals. Sam's family is one with faith in God, blessing the Immanuel community with their presence and vitality.

Laws "unjust"

Some politicians are taking a bold stand on immigration. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City has challenged new laws as "not only unjust but dangerous to public health and safety." If undocumented immigrants fear being caught by immigration officials, he argues, they will avoid sending their children to school, will not seek medical care or report crimes. For the first time, immigration law discriminates against *legal* immigrants. "In return for the privileges of American residency, (legal) immigrants pay federal, state and local taxes at the same rate as American citizens. But under the new laws, legal immigrants are denied disability benefits and food stamps, and states may also refuse them welfare assistance and non-emergency medical care. Withholding these benefits from immigrants, who are here legally and whose taxes help pay for these very programs, is arguably unconstitutional—and certainly inequitable," wrote Giuliani.

There are those who, despite society's push to keep people out, open their hearts to uprooted people. Ken Steiner, a member of Cross Church in Berne, IN, reflected on his congregation's role in resettling a Bosnian family separated by war and reunited with their help. "We became aware of a need. We had a way in which to respond through the UCBWM and we reached out in love, trusting the Holy Spirit to bring us a family we could love. What a fantastic family that has blessed us with their presence! We have learned another dimension of witnessing to God's love as lived among us in the life of Jesus Christ."

The young man who came to our office just before Christmas came back. He met with the Rev. Allen MacLean of Victoria Congregational Church in Queens, New York, in January. He has a place to stay for two months, a date to have his case reviewed by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, some money for food, a lot more hope and a community of faith to receive him, clothe him and pray with him.

Mary Kuenning Gross, Administrator
UCBWM Refugee Resettlement Office

***Pre-Synod Teach-in:** At General Synod XXI in Columbus, OH, a pre-Synod teach-in will be held July 3 from 10-2 entitled *A Moment to Choose*: *Risking to Be With Uprooted People*. Guest speaker will be Dr. Elizabeth Ferris, author and director of the Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program.

***For further information** on refugees and related matters contact the UCBWM Refugee Resettlement Office (phone 212/870-3369, fax 212/932-1236, email grossm@ucc.org).

Timorese share peace prize

Two East Timor men received the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts toward a just and peaceful solution to the conflict there. They are supported by the UCBWM, which has passed a resolution advocating the rights of East Timorese to self-determination, and other U.S. church groups and the NCCC.

Recipients were Carlos Belo, an East Timorese Roman Catholic Bishop, and Jose Ramos-Horta, East Timor's foreign minister prior to Indonesia's 1976 annexation of the former Portuguese colony, who is now exiled in Australia. They were honored for "their sustained and self-sacrificing contributions for a small but oppressed people." Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor in 1975 caused the deaths of approximately 1/3 of the population.

The UCBWM resolution calls on the U.S. government to cease military aid (including training and sale of arms) to Indonesia as long as it continues the occupation, and celebrates the acceptance of our partner, the Christian Church of East Timor, as a member of the World Council of Churches and its participation in ecumenical bodies in order that the East Timor church may have an independent voice. The UCBWM participates in the Church World Service task force formed around East Timor issues. For further information call the Southern Asia Office at 212/870-2837, email <yuanh@ucc.org>.

Common Board actions *(continued from page 1)*

concerns outlined in the resolution. It also urges church members to examine their understanding of the significance of Jerusalem in their theologies, interreligious relations and tourism/pilgrimage practices.

The resolution notes that the restrictions Israel has placed on access to Jerusalem for Palestinian Christians and Muslims has had a devastating effect on their right to worship at sacred places, as well as on Palestinian economy, education, health care and family unity. It urges leaders of the three Abrahamic faiths—Christians, Jews and Muslims—to use the "prophetic imagination of their traditions to define new modes of sovereignty and governance, so that Jerusalem will stand as a symbol of peace and conviviality, a living antidote to the contemporary diseases of bigotry, intolerance, ultranationalism and exclusivism." The city "hallowed in our faith, the mother who nurtures without favoritism her children," cannot " 'belong' to any one people or history" but must recognize its unique role as a spiritual home holy to all.

* In view of the Nigerian military's systematic abuse of the Nigerian people, well documented by international human rights agencies, the CGMB called for an international ban on the purchase of Nigerian oil for the U.S. market by Shell, Mobil and other U.S.-based petroleum companies. Africa executive Dan Hoffman said oil accounts for 80% of the oppressive regime's revenues, "and Shell Oil is at the heart of it."

The statement, going to GS XXI, also called for bans on travel for Nigeria's military rulers and associates as well as the sale of military equipment to Nigeria, an international sports boycott and suspension of all non-humanitarian aid, and a freeze of assets and bank accounts of Nigerian rulers and families. The regime's pledge to restore democratic rule by October 1998 is not deemed credible.

* Hong Kong will revert from British rule to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997. In 1995 elections, pro-democracy candidates won a majority of legislative seats. China, however, has declared the elections unfair, and plans to dismantle the democratically elected body in 1997 and replace it with an appointed legislature. Although the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 said the lifestyle and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong would be guaranteed for 50 years following the transition, Hong Kong Christians are uncertain about such freedoms in the future.

The resolution urges continued political tolerance and religious freedom and declares June 29, 1997, a Day of Prayer for the people and churches of Hong Kong and China. Less than 10% of Hong Kong's population is Christian, but the church's role in the colony's development has been significant, especially in the areas of health and education. The HK Council of the Church of Christ in China is a Global Ministries partner and the largest Protestant denomination in Hong Kong. (See related article, page 3)

* The resolution on Okinawa urges the U.S. to immediately implement a phased removal of all U.S. military bases and personnel from the island, and an environmental clean-up.

After World War II, when an estimated one-third of the native Okinawan population died in the cross-fire between U.S. and Japanese military forces, Japan signed a treaty allowing U.S. military occupation to take place on Okinawa as opposed to the main Japanese islands. U.S. military personnel have since had a significant negative impact on Okinawan life. Since 1972 Okinawans have had to deal with 120 American plane crashes; forest fires, soil erosion and earth tremors from shelling; a flourishing sex industry around the U.S. bases which imports women from poorer Asian countries; about 1,000 crimes a year perpetrated by American military personnel; and toxic pollution from American weapons systems.

* See details of the resolution on a Day of Prayer for Burma on page 5.

* In continuing concern regarding state-promoted homophobia in Zimbabwe, the site of the 1998 World Council of Churches Assembly, a resolution reaffirmed support for civil rights of gay and lesbian people. The Africa Office has prepared a packet on the issue.

The next Common Global Ministries Board meeting will be held April 17-20, 1997, in Indianapolis.

Meeting separately, UCBWM Corporate Members, missionaries and staff were exhorted by several speakers to become "living stones" for God's mission, to "build a spiritual temple around the globe with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone." Wisconsin Conference Minister Fred Trost said, "We are grateful for the witness of the UCBWM." He singled out

"... gifts which lent us heart."

the support and presence of One Great Hour of Sharing staff and program during trying times of Midwest flooding, citing "gifts which lent us heart." He presented a chalice representing discipleship and unity in Christ ("our custom when friends come into our midst") and a monetary gift of $23,000 for rebuilding burned churches in the south.

The UCBWM Board of Directors adopted a 1997 budget ceiling not to exceed $12,668,460, with estimated receipts of $10,515,460 and a deficit of $2,153,000, to be funded from unrestricted reserves.

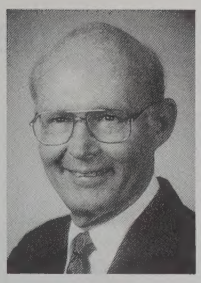
Also adopted was a resolution reaffirming the connection between mission, stewardship and basic support (including OGHS) throughout all parts of the UCC. Included was more emphasis on stewardship awareness and education, and cooperation with seminaries and educational institutions—encouraging practical and personal disciplines regarding the use of money, property, possessions, talents and time.

The next Annual Meeting of the UCBWM will be held Nov. 14-17 in Santa Fe, NM.

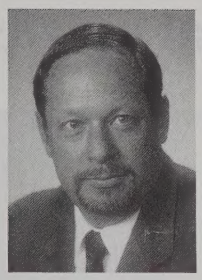
On UCC Home Page

Some of the articles found in *Whole Earth Newsletter* are also posted on the UCC Home Page. Readers who visit the home page will find, when available, the author's Internet email address included with the article. This means readers will be able to "click on" to the writer's address and send comments and questions directly to the source. Other items on the UCBWM section of the home page include *Whole Earth Newsletter* "Issue Perspectives," brochure information on topics such as global Christianity and travel in the Holy Land, and current UCBWM programs. The home page address is <http://www.ucc.org>.

Ann Click

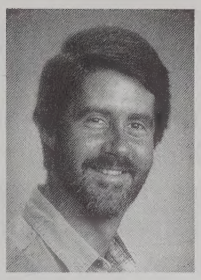


David Click

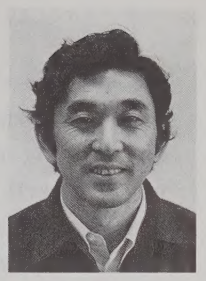


Robert Stieber

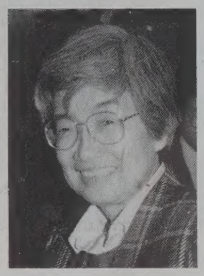
Diane Weible



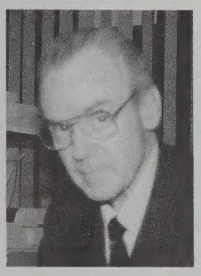
Tim Weible



Ron Fujiyoshi



Aiko Carter



Tony Carter

Thirteen appointed

(Continued from page 1)

faith."

David Grogan is returning to Kafue Secondary School in Zambia, where he has been teaching math since 1974, for a four-year term. Kafue is a boarding school for 700 students which has "no frills, not even a calculator," Grogan said.

Although the area has high unemployment and inflation, area executive Dan Hoffman pointed out that Kafue students come out with better math skills than they would have with a U.S. high school education.

Ann and David Click will return to Africa June 1 to serve three more years with the Christian Health Association of Lesotho—Ann with CHAL's community health programs and David in CHAL's accounting office in Maseru. Much of Ann's work is as liaison with government health programs and in interpretation. She also works on several United Nations-related programs.

Robert Stieber has returned to his position with Osaka Kyoku of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), working primarily with the Buraku Liberation Center. He edits their English-language newsletter which deals with discrimination against the buraku people, as well as Korean, Ainu, Okinawan and other groups in Japan.

He said although the Christian church in Japan represents less than one percent of the population, the Christian voice on a lot of issues has been a major one. "In my case, being able to help technically is a very necessary component of their work."

Diane and Tim Weible both serve as pastors doing rural evangelism in the Tono area of the Ou Kyoku Conference of the Kyodan. They are returning for three more years, starting April 1. Tim said the family is happy being in a rural area but it is not without its trials, such as being isolated. People there struggle with what it means to be Christian.

Diane said she has always believed in her call but it wasn't until she went to Japan and saw a woman turned down for marriage three times because she was Christian that she realized what this can mean for some people.

Aiko and Tony Carter were approved for another three-year term in Japan. Aiko will continue her assignment with Tokyo Kyoku related to women's issues, as will Tony with his work with churches and environmental issues.

Xuyen Dangers will serve a four-year term as a consultant for development in Laos and Vietnam, including projects with Disciples and UCC connections. This is a joint appointment with the Church World Service and Witness Unit of the National Council of Churches.

Ron Fujiyoshi was appointed for an additional year of service as a missionary in residence with the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches. He works on issues related to the indigenous Hawaiian struggle and other issues impacting Pacific people and nations.

Japan, Turkey retirees honored

Two couples whose combined service represents the better part of 200 years were honored as missionaries emeriti when their stories were shared at the 187th Annual Meeting of the UCBWM.

Resolutions recognized Armin and Evelyn Kroehler, whose total years in Japan span nearly a century, and Ruth and Wallace Robeson, who each spent 40-plus years in Turkey.

The Kroehlers' career began in 1950 when they located in Aizu-Takada, Fukushima Prefecture, to do rural evangelism. Armin has been director of the Aizu Christian Rural Life Center since its founding, and was part of a pastoral team with Japanese colleagues who worked with 12 rural churches. Both Armin and Evelyn, an occupational therapist, led Bible study groups and spoke at many gatherings. Evelyn was born in Sendai, Japan, to UCC missionary parents Gilbert and Cornelia Schroer.

Armin is the author of several books on church life in Japan. In honor of the Kroehlers' service, a collection of their sermons and speeches titled *A Grain of Mustard Seed* (in Japanese) was published in 1992 by the Japanese church.

The Robesons worked in Turkey since the early 1950's—well over half the life of that republic. They devoted their lives to teaching Turkish children in Izmir, Talas, Tarsus (where Wally spent 21 years as a school principal) and then again in Izmir. Ruth counseled English language teachers at the Izmir Turkish-American Association after many years of teaching English to beginners.

Middle East executive Dale Bishop, citing a tribute to the Robesons that appeared in an Izmir newspaper as they prepared to leave their home in Turkey, said, "From such testimonies we know that (they demonstrated) that histories of conflict, mistrust and misunderstandings can be overcome by simple expressions of love and respect."

Missionaries: global service providers

WHEN was the last time you talked with someone who worships in another language, baptises new converts in a river, ministers to street children or knows about starting a church and rebuilding a community after a war? It's possible, you know. Missionaries serving through Global Ministries can tell you about these things and more.

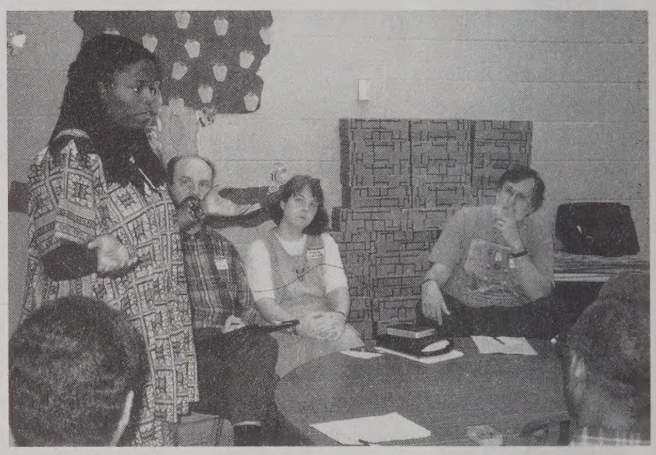
Ginny Sielert is the Global Ministries executive in charge of the Office for Missionary Relationships for both the Disciples and the UCC.

WHY would you want to talk to a missionary? One church member put it this way: "I realize that we are part of the good news, and it can come to us from the voices of others around the world. We realize that we are part of a global community. What an eye-opener!" Thirty-seven of our missionaries spoke in 690 churches last year, sharing the story of God's work in the world, engaging us in their passion for mission and challenging us to live in mission as well. One who listened to this message said, "I heard how faith sustains this missionary in difficult situations and, in that moment, I felt the presence of God with me. I was led to a new understanding of how we as church are called to be concerned, to help, and not to fear the unknown."

WHAT could a missionary tell us that we don't already know? Since missionaries are teachers, health workers, community development people and journalists, as well as preachers and evangelists, they invite us into new ways of doing mission—and to open ourselves to receiving mission here at home. Putting a face on mission is often what we long for; "We saw that mission is about real people providing real service."

WHO are these missionaries, and whom do they represent? Recruited through the Common Global Ministries Board of the United Church Board for World Ministries and the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), these 207 missionaries are primarily church members of the UCC and Disciples. Global Ministries staff work closely with our Christian partners to define the work to which the missionary is assigned. They represent you in part of God's global ministry.

HOW can your church receive a missionary? Let your Conference staff know of your interest. They tell the Office for Missionary Relationships (317/635-3113, Ext. 284), which schedules missionary visits during a portion of the missionary's time. They are assigned to speak in UCC and Disciples churches.



Tina James tells of AIDS education in Uganda.

Once a request is received, we look at which missionaries will be returning and how long they will be available. We offer a visit to the Conference when we are certain of available dates. Conference staff are then responsible for advertising the missionary visit, receiving requests, and scheduling the visits. Global Ministries pays to get the missionary to and from the Conference. The Conference and hosting churches cover the expense of local transportation, meals and housing.

WHERE can missionaries speak? Everywhere! In small as well as large churches, and not only on Sunday morning for worship! Think creatively. Gather interested people around meals, teas, coffees, social events and youth events. Find out what kind

"I realize that we are part of the good news. . . What an eye-opener!"

of ministry the missionary does and think of how your church does ministry in that area. Try something new! If the missionary works with the homeless, schedule a time to go to a shelter with the missionary, and then talk about what you saw, felt and heard. Thank God in worship together for the opportunity to be in ministry with new people in your community and with those with whom the missionary works. One teenager said this type of experience was an entirely new way to experience God's work, and he was inspired to volunteer his services on a regular basis to work with the homeless.

As a result of a mission visit, evaluations have shown that church members are more willing to support the overseas mission work of the church than in the past. A few churches have added Our Churches' Wider Mission to their budgets after spending time with a missionary.

Many church members have felt a lasting impact from a missionary visit. By sharing the vision of what it is to be in mission, the whole ministry of the church is lifted up. In seeking this wholeness, we embark on a mission journey toward healing ourselves, our church and our communities. — Ginny Sielert

Sharing Office receives flood reports

(OGHS funds disbursed)

Damage reports from flooding on the west coast received by UCBWM's Global Sharing of Resources Office in recent weeks (which disburses One Great Hour of Sharing funds) included requests from the Northern California/Nevada and the Central Pacific Conferences of the UCC. Of the five western states facing damage from flooding and mud slides, losses in northern and central California alone are estimated at more than $1.5 billion.

The Rev. Joyce B. Ellis, acting Conference Minister for Northern California/Nevada, reported that the Guernville UCC Church took on up to a foot and a half of water, while Weaverville UCC sustained structural damage. The Global Sharing Office responded immediately with $5,000 in OGHS funds. In general, she said, churches in the most affected areas have been spared, but there is great destruction in the locales they serve.

An initial dispatch of $5,000 in OGHS funds was also sent to the Central Pacific Conference at the request of Conference Minister Hector Lopez. There has also been damage from flooding in the Washington/North Idaho Conference.

Persons wishing to send monetary help should send gifts to their Conference offices designated precisely "West coast floods," with a request that they be sent on as soon as possible to the Global Sharing of Resources Office. This will ensure that funds go to the correct flooding area. Clean-up and health kits are also needed. Church World Service issued an initial appeal for $500,000. The Global Sharing Office responded with another $5,000 to this appeal, which will be used to aid interfaith response groups in five states—California, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Nevada.

A $500,000 CWS appeal has also been issued to help with the food crisis in North Korea, and $20,000 in OGHS funds was sent. This CWS appeal is set within the context of a worldwide appeal for $2.1 million from ACT (Action by Churches Together), the international emergency response consortium of churches and their agencies. The crisis stems from systemic food production problems compounded by flooding in North Korea in 1995 and 1996.

Late in January, East Asia/Pacific area executive Ching-fen Hsiao and Linda Petrucelli, Global Sharing of Resources executive, were part of a CWS delegation who visited the country to see a CWS rice distribution start-up.

Chronicle

LOSSES TO THE FAMILY

Dorothy Appleby, 89, former missionary to Sri Lanka from 1951 to 1971, died Nov. 19, 1996, in Hampshire County, United Kingdom. A nurse, she worked half that time at Green Memorial Hospital and the remainder doing outreach work at a clinic for farm families.

Lucile C. Hartman died Nov. 23, 1996, in Upper Sandusky, OH, at the age of 83. She served 34 years in China and Hong Kong. She was born in China of Evangelical & Reformed missionary parents. Miss Hartman served as a teacher in girls' schools in several locations as well as at a home for war orphans before being forced to leave China in 1949. She then spent 21 years as a high school English and Christian education teacher in Hong Kong. She is survived by a brother, Ward, also of Upper Sandusky.

Elsie Schomer, who served 12 years in France, died Nov. 4, 1996, in Oakland, CA. She was 77. She and her husband Howard shared the lives of Europeans rebuilding after World War II. She was founder-director of the Fraternal Welcome hostel and retreat center in the French mountain village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, whose mostly Protestant inhabitants had saved over 5,000 refugees from Nazi deportation during the war. Howard was the first Secretary of the World Issues Office of the UCBWM, which later became the Global Education & Advocacy Office. She is survived by her husband and children Karine, Mark, Paul and Ellen.

Robert M. Thomas, former president of the Disciples' Division of Overseas Ministries, died Oct. 23, 1996. He is survived by his wife Marjorie and daughters Karen and Judy.

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF

Ruth Albrecht
Otto Artopoeus
Judy Beebe
Pierre V. Andrae
Jack Batten
Jack Brooks
Jim & Florence Brown
Robert M. Dohm
Financial Planning Consultants
David & Judy Nagel
Daryl & Julie Rhodes
Dorothy & Herbert Robbs
Paul Sherry
Donald Stoner
United Church of Christ
Barbara E. West
Fred Bunker
Carol C. Gilley
Arthur & Julia Christofersen
Carol C. Gilley
Gretchen Feiker
Richard Edmunds
Elinor Galusha
Evelyn Wilson
Peter Gowing
Eugene Wittkopf
Lucille Hartman
Donald Bergmann
William Daniels
Nancy Jones
Lawrence Gilley
Acton E. Loar
Robert Ellis
Myron Pinkerton
Lawrence Gilley
Margaret B. Rodriguez
Robert & Sandra Rodriguez
Annah Bursaw Tucker
Lawrence Gilley
Josephine Van Meter
Luella B. Blair
Lura A. Carr
Mabel Dwinell
Catharine Rogers
John Stedman
Ellen C. Tillingast
William & Ida Wilcox
Carol C. Gilley
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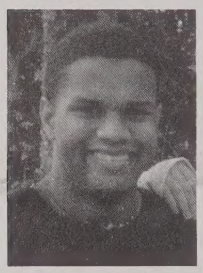
Rwandan refugees return home

By Nico Gourdet, Program Associate, Global Ministries Africa Office



Gourdet

Following the recent turmoil in the Great Lakes region of Eastern Za involving various ethnic, militia and political entities, and after mu pressure by Zairian rebels, Rwandan Hutus finally have decided t home. Several thousand ha begun to leave Tanzania.

Their initial fear for not doing so earlier is understandable. It was primarily Hutu military extremists who were responsible for the 1994 genocide of thousands of Tutsis and Hutu moderates. The scope of the conflict, however, should not be reduced to mere ethnic-bashing as the popular media would lead us to believe.

Several players have had influence in the violent outcome of the Great Lakes region. Historical underpinnings to the crisis date back to the days of Belgian colonialism when Rwandan Tutsis were given special treatment with better education and administrative positions, which began to fuel animosity with local Hutus. Since then, the United States and France have advanced their agendas in the region by supporting Zaire President Mobutu's regime partly because of vast mineral wealth in Zaire. Zaire's political, social and economic infrastructure under Mobuto has collapsed completely, leaving no real sense of order or governance in the country. For various reasons — including the desire for wealth and political control — several military and political leaders in the region have sought their personal interests as well. This reality leads many observers to believe that it is very possible for Zaire to violently break up into several different countries. Whatever the present nature of the conflict, the refugees finally have been welcomed back to Rwanda by the Tutsi-led government of Paul Kagame.

Tough times are still ahead for the returning refugees. *The* belongs to those who owned it prior to 1994. There will certain- finding parents for orphaned children, expanding individual income-generating projects, providing plowing tools and seeds, as well as medicine. There are still countless displaced people who remain within Zaire's borders who are not accounted for.

Perhaps the biggest concern of all is how Rwanda will achieve a sustainable peace with a minority regime (Tutsi) in charge. Although most parliamentary seats are controlled by Hutus, real power lies with the Tutsi-led army. As a result of land disputes, the refugees' return, and the fact that thousands of Hutus are still in overflowing prisons, Rwanda could very well be another powder keg ready to explode.

Investment portfolio resource

Walking in Integrity, the 1996 edition, is now available from the UCBWM Mission Education and Interpretation Office. It is a compilation of all social screens currently in place on the UCBWM investment portfolio, as well as lists of companies excluded by each screen in which the UCBWM will not participate.

Copies at $3 each may be ordered from the MEI Office at 700 Prospect Ave., 6th Fl., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100.